



Ola Lokahi

Creating a Healthy Hawaii Together

JUNE 2017

Virginia Pressler, M.D.
Director

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Keith Y. Yamamoto
Deputy Director

♦ ♦ ♦

Danette Wong Tomiyasu
Deputy Director
Health Resources

♦ ♦ ♦

Lynn N. Fallin
Deputy Director
Behavior Health Services

♦ ♦ ♦

Keith Kawaoka
Deputy Director
Environmental Health

♦ ♦ ♦

Janice Okubo
Public Information Officer
Communications Office

♦ ♦ ♦

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Communications Office

♦ ♦ ♦

**Please direct all
inquiries to:**

Hawaii Dept. of Health
Communications Office
1250 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
Tel. 586-4407

The mission of the Department of Health is to protect and improve the health and environment for all people in Hawaii. We believe that an optimal state of physical, mental, social and environmental well-being is a right and responsibility of all of Hawaii's people.

Message From the Director

It's hard to believe that the year is nearly halfway over. So far, 2017 has been a busy year for our department but with your dedication and hard work, we have been able to meet the many challenges that have come our way.

Speaking of dedication and hard work, several of our employees were honored at the Governor's Awards Ceremony held May 18th at the State Capital. I'm extremely proud of our nominees for State Employee, Manager and Team of

the Year. On behalf of our department, I would like to commend our nominees for their exemplary performance

and for serving the people of Hawaii. Please read more about them on page 2 of this newsletter.

Our dedicated staff has also worked tirelessly over the last several months in dealing with the increased numbers of mumps, rat



lungworm, hepatitis A and other public health concerns. I am grateful for their efforts to track and confirm the number of cases and to get the word out quickly to the public on how to better protect themselves and their families from these infectious diseases.

In closing, I encourage you to take some time to read through this newsletter which provides the latest "goings on" at the DOH. May your summer be golden and memorable!

Preparing for 2017 Hurricane Season

Meteorologists say Hawaii could see more hurricanes this year if El Nino conditions continue to develop. If so, families should prepare sooner rather than later for hurricane season in Hawaii, which runs from June 1 through November 30.

According to scientists, El Nino occurs when warm Pacific Ocean waters pool at the equator and alter weather patterns worldwide. For Hawaii, this means muggy conditions, warmer oceans, rainy summers, dangerous surf swells and a greater number of hurricanes.

There are steps you can take to begin preparing now. Experts advise reviewing your homeowners insurance policy to see that you have the coverage you need. Next, gather and keep vital documents in a secure, waterproof container and prepare a family evacuation plan. You will also need to have enough supplies of essential items—bottled water, non-perishable goods, prescription medication, flashlight,



Hurricane Iniki's struck Kauai in 1992 with wind speeds of up to 145 mph.

radio, batteries, etc.—to last at least five to seven days. Most of all, stay informed.

"The best time to prepare for an emergency is before one occurs," said DOH Director Virginia Pressler. "Part of being a good citizen is not being dependent on the government, especially after a disaster when emergency services will be stretched extremely thin. We need to prepare for the worst but also hope for the best."

Download HECO's emergency preparedness handbook at: www.hawaiianelectric.com/safety-and-outages/storm-center/emergency-preparedness-handbook for more on preparing for hurricanes.

Governor's Awards Ceremony Honors DOH Employees

Several DOH employees were honored for outstanding work performance at the 2017 Governor's Awards Ceremony held May 18 at the State House of Representatives Chamber. The event honored state employees who exemplify the highest caliber of public service and dedication to serving the people of Hawaii.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Louise Kido Iwaishi, MD was nominated for State Employee of the Year. She is a board-certified physician and a faculty member of the Community Pediatrics Division of the Department of Pediatrics, John A. Burns School of Medicine.

For the past 20 years, Dr. Iwaishi has provided consultation to the state departments of Health, Human Services and Education relating to children with special health care needs and their families, especially those who are medically fragile and technology dependent.

As a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter, Dr. Iwaishi has advocated for children access to oral health dental care and early childhood access to quality child care. Most recently as the consultant medical director of the Family Health Services Division, she has worked to restart the legislated Child Death Review Program and to support the Hawaii Safe Sleep network.

Dr. Iwaishi describes herself as a local girl from Maui who has made of the most her opportunities to serve the

community.

"My passion has always been to care for children with special health care needs and with medically complex chronic conditions. My calling is to educate a maternal child health workforce with the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to partner with families and youth to achieve their independence," she said.

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Nominated for State Manager of the Year was **Peter Oshiro**, Environmental Health Program Manager, who has been with the DOH for 29 years. Peter heads



*DOH Manager of the Year nominee
Peter Oshiro*

the Environmental Regulatory Program which oversees the food industry; pools; tattoo shops and artists; embalmers and mortuaries; barber, beauty and massage parlors; hospitals and medical facilities; and food safety education. The award was humbling for Peter, who credited his hard-working staff.

"My supervisory, support and field staff are the ones who actually do all the hard work. I am merely the front man," Peter said.

Internal transparency and close collaboration have enabled regulatory program to constantly "raise the bar" to improve internal quality control metrics. For example, the Green-Yellow-Red placarding program and the public food establishment inspection website introduced in 2014 and 2016 respectively have been tremendously successful in reducing the occurrence of food illness

risk factors.

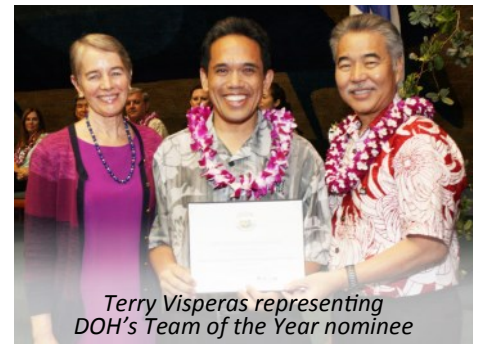
"Thanks to everyone's hard work, we have seen a significant reduction in the issuance of yellow 'conditional pass' placards, issued when two or more critical violations are observed on an inspection, from July 2014 to the present," Peter said.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

DOH's nominee for Team of the Year was the **Public Health Emergency Preparedness Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Team**. The team plays an integral part in safeguarding residents and employees during public health emergencies by planning for and operating emergency distribution of lifesaving pharmaceuticals.

Representing the team at the awards ceremony was **Terry Visperas**, SNS Coordinator/Planner IV. Last year, the team held a full-scale, multi-agency exercise to practice procedures designed to allow for the rapid distribution of medications to the public during a large-scale emergency or disaster. The two-day exercise involved 1,350 people from 65 agencies from federal, state and county governments and the private sector.

"There are a lot of amazing teams from various DOH departments that are deserving of the title," Terry says. "The bigger reward is knowing that after



*Terry Visperas representing
DOH's Team of the Year nominee*

months of planning, this amazing team successfully conducted the SNS exercise. Our collective efforts and actions will safeguard state residents and visitors during public health emergencies."



*DOH Employee of the Year nominee
Dr. Iwaishi with DOH Director Dr. Pressler
and Gov. Ige*

Preventing Senior Falls at Home

Falling is painful enough for most people but for the elderly, a simple fall can lead to often debilitating and even life-threatening injuries.

To reduce the number of fall-related injuries and fatalities among Hawaii's seniors, the State Department of Health is launching its Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Campaign from June 16 through August 30.

Statistics from the department's Emergency Medical Services & Injury Prevention Branch show that 94 seniors in Hawaii die each year from falls, 1,940 are hospitalized and 8,050 are taken to the emergency room.

Falls also take a heavy financial toll on Hawaii's families and the healthcare system. Estimated hospital costs associated with injuries sustained by falls account for nearly \$120 million each year.

"This is an important public health issue that we must raise more awareness of to prevent the tragedy and hardships that injuries from falls can bring to families," says DOH Director Dr. **Virginia Pressler**.

Consider the following tips to prevent falls and fall-related injuries:

- ❖ Get an annual eye exam.
- ❖ If you live alone, get a life-saving Personal Electronic Safety device.
- ❖ Make your home safer by removing fall hazards and improving lighting.
- ❖ Exercise regularly to increase balance and flexibility.

"By taking a few simple precautions and making basic changes to the home

environment, seniors can live life, fall-free," said

Stan Michaels, DOH Fall Prevention Coordinator, EMS & Injury Prevention System Branch.



IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

DOH and the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium are sponsoring the campaign in collaboration with Foodland Supermarkets, Times Supermarkets, KTA Superstores, Safeway Supermarkets, Kaiser Permanente, the Hawaii Community Pharmacy Association, Project Vision Hawaii and City Mill. The consortium also includes government agencies, professional organizations, non-profit organizations, hospitals, care facilities and senior organizations.

In July and August, several new public service announcements on fall prevention will air on television stations KHON, KGMB, KHNL, KITV and KIKU. During the campaign, about 220 pharmacists will conduct in-store reviews of seniors' medications and balance tests to determine fall risk. On Friday, June 16, Project Vision Hawaii and the consortium will offer free eye tests and vision screening at Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Also on June 16, more than 66 stores and clinics statewide representing nine major market, pharmacy and hardware corporations will distribute 69,000 "bag

stuffers" containing fall prevention tips for seniors, plus information on additional resources.

City Mill in Kaimuki will host "meet and greet" sessions with the public on July 8 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to offer home safety recommendations. City Mill in Pearl City will hold a similar event on July 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Home safety specialists from the DOH will be present at both events to answer questions about the latest senior assistive safety devices designed to help make any home as "fall-proof" as possible.

Kaiser Permanente has also produced a home safety video demonstrating how to make a home "fall-proof" for seniors. The video can be shown during home visits by social workers or for playback in clinic waiting rooms.

Tai chi for health, arthritis and fall prevention classes will be taught by certified teachers at 33 locations statewide from June through August. According to the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, tai chi and other exercise programs can increase strength and improve balance, making falls much less likely. Call (808) 733-9202 or go to: <http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/home/preventing-falls/tai-chi/> for times and locations.

DOH's Senior Fall Prevention program was recognized as "the finest public awareness campaign in the nation" at the White House Conference on Aging/ 2016 NCOA National Falls Prevention Resources Conference in Alexandria, Virginia.

From June through August 2017, Stan and Michael Dowell, Chair of the Hawaii Fall Prevention Consortium, will give presentations to various senior organizations and community groups around the state.

For more information about fall prevention for seniors, go online to <http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/home/preventing-falls/information/> or call (808) 733-9202.



Stan Michaels

DOH Employees Extend Aloha to Hawaii Foodbank

Every day in Hawaii, thousands of seniors, immigrants, veterans and families rely on the Hawaii Food Bank for meals. The need for assistance is unrelenting. Last year, the Food Bank distributed over 12.8 million pounds of food to people in need.

The Food Bank could not make such a positive impact without the many dedicated volunteers who show up at various food drives, fundraisers and community events throughout the year.

When the Food Bank announced its 2017 campaign in March, **Michele Tong** of the Developmental Disabilities Division organized fellow DOH employees to start collecting canned goods. **Ashley Agmata** stepped up with her “can-do” attitude and inspired the Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion Division to support the Food Bank with a friendly competition to

bring in donations. The motto of **Noella Narimatsu** and the Environmental Health gang was “EHA Expects Good Returns on Food Bank Deposits.”

Maui Community Mental Health Center and Hale O Lanakila Clubhouse volunteers contributed by fundraising with bentos they prepared, then held a collection drive that netted a total of 211 lbs. of food.

“It’s important for us to give back to a program that’s benefitted so many people in our community,” said **Kathleen Tom**, PH program manager for the Maui CMHC/ Adult Mental Health Division. “The Maui Food Bank has helped our Hale O Lanakila Clubhouse and our case managers have gotten provisions for needy clients. It was for a very good cause and shows that we have a heart for helping those in need.”

While DOH’s overall donations have yet

to be tabulated, a fundraiser/ bake sale held by the Disease Outbreak & Control Division brought in \$1,413.50, plus donations of 190 lbs. of rice and 184 lbs. of canned goods. The Administrative Services Office (ASO) also collected 104 lbs. of rice and canned goods along with \$1,440 from their white elephant/ bake sale.

Nicki Mak from ASO supports the Food Bank’s mission, saying “I believe in the work that the Food Bank does. It’s our responsibility to look out for one another. In so doing, we enrich our own lives and on a larger scale, our community.”

Some DOH employees will continue to support the Food Bank by volunteering to pack monthly food boxes for needy seniors. To get involved, send an email to: volunteer@hawaiifoodbank.org or call (808) 954-7869.



(Top Left): Environmental Resource Office and the Environmental Planning Office employees with their collected goods for the food drive. From left are: Gordon Yamaguchi, Val Ishihara, Noella Narimatsu, Laura McIntyre, Nancy Bartter, Sheryl Kajiyama, Wendy Nagano and Carol Rivera. (Top Right): Nicki Mak and Peter Galla from the Administrative Services Office (ASO) organized a plant/jewelry/white elephant/bake sale fundraiser. (Bottom left): Maui Community Mental Health Center and Hale O Lanakila Clubhouse volunteers pose for a group photo. Members are (top row) Beau, Tante, Chino, Ted, Greg and Gerald. (Bottom row): Justin and Judy. (Bottom Right): Tobacco Prevention and Education Program (TPEP) team members display their donations to promote friendly competition within the division. Pictured are (top row, from left): Kathleen Koga, Tina Vidinha and Muhammad Anwar Quadri; and (bottom row) Leslie Yap and Lila Johnson. Missing: Jill Tamashiro, Ron Paik and Ashley Agmata.